

# NEW MOTHER FACT SHEET

## Breast Milk



### Collecting/Expression

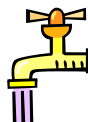
- Wash hands well with soap and water.
- Wash all collection devices using hot, soapy water or place in a dishwasher.
- Follow the directions that come with the pump; always start with the suction control at the lowest setting, and keep the nipple centered in the pump flange opening (breast cup).
- Express each breast until the flow of milk slows down and the breast softens, usually 10 to 20 minutes.
- The best times to express are early in the morning or between feedings when your breasts seem full.
- Relax and think about baby to encourage milk release and increase the amount.



### Storage

- Store milk in clean containers, such as screw cap bottles or storage bags that fit directly into bottles.
- Clearly label container with the date. Add child's name if taking it to child care or hospital.
- Pumped milk may be added to frozen milk if it is first chilled and the amount of fresh milk is less than what is frozen.
- Do not save milk from a used bottle for use at another feeding.
- Freeze two to four ounces at a time, depending on the average amount of a single feeding.
- Freeze milk if you will not be using it within 24 hours.

*See back of page for breast milk storage guidelines.*



### Thawing

- Use the oldest milk first.
- To thaw frozen breast milk: place overnight in the refrigerator; place in a bowl of warm water for 20 minutes; or, hold the bottle under warm running water to quickly thaw.
- Avoid using a microwave; uneven heating may cause burns in the baby's mouth. Excess heat can destroy the nutrient quality.
- Thawed milk is safe in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Do not refreeze.

### Returning to Work

- It is best to wait three to four weeks after delivery before introducing a bottle to baby so that breastfeeding is well established.
- Begin to pump and store milk one to two weeks before returning to work.
- Pump three times during an eight-hour work day or every three hours you are away from your baby. If you can't pump three times, pump as much as you can each day.
- Breastfeeding whenever you are with your baby helps maintain your milk supply.

If you are having problems breastfeeding, ask for assistance from a lactation consultant, health-care provider, hospital, your local public health unit, or your local WIC program.




Check out [www.gotmomma.com](http://www.gotmomma.com) for more breastfeeding information.



## Storage Duration of Fresh Human Milk for Use With Healthy Full-Term Infants

Location	Temperature	Duration	Comments
Countertop, table	Room temperature (up to 77°F or 25°C)	6 to 8 hours	Containers should be covered and kept as cool as possible; covering the container with a cool towel may keep milk cooler.
Insulated cooler bag	5 to 39°F or -15 to 4°C	24 hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk containers at all times; limit opening cooler bag.
Refrigerator	39°F or 4°C	5 days	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.
Freezer			Store milk toward the back of the freezer, where temperature is most constant. Milk stored for longer durations in the ranges listed is safe, but some of the lipids in the milk undergo a breakdown resulting in lower quality.
Freezer compartment of a refrigerator	5°F or -15°C	2 weeks	
Freezer compartment of refrigerator with separate doors	0°F or -18°C	3 to 6 months	
Chest or upright deep freezer	-4°F or -20°C	6 to 12 months	

Reference: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. (2004) [Clinical Protocol Number #8: Human Milk Storage Information for Home Use for Healthy Full Term Infants](#). \*(PDF - 125K) Princeton Junction, New Jersey: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. Available